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IN MEMORIAM.¹

DR. C. F. P. BANCROFT, LATE PRINCIPAL OF PHILLIPS
ACADEMY, ANDOVER, MASS.

THE ripened grain gives token of earth's bounty and the harvest song is a triumph of nature's true processes. The ingathering of the sheaves leaves bleak fields and dreariness on the earth, but the earth functions have not failed—in the season's fruit-bearing a victory is recorded.

Since the association last met one at least of its honored members has rounded out his earthly season—Dr. C. F. P. Bancroft, of Andover.

In the fruitfulness of the life, in the crowning of the years, in the seed-sowing, and in the garnering, nature hath in him and through him wrought a very perfect work. In the emptiness of the lives now touched by his only in memory, is not lacking the conviction and the comfort that the Mother Earth has gathered a well-ripened sheaf, or with slight turning of the figure, she has but called from the fields a trusty husbandman, a servant rejoicing in the harvest, a laborer himself laden with rich sheaves.

It is your privilege, who have known him as fellow-educator, as counsellor, as friend, to pay tribute to his memory and to strengthen the deliberations of today in the recollections of the

¹Read before the annual meeting of the Head Masters' Association, New York city, December 27, 1901.

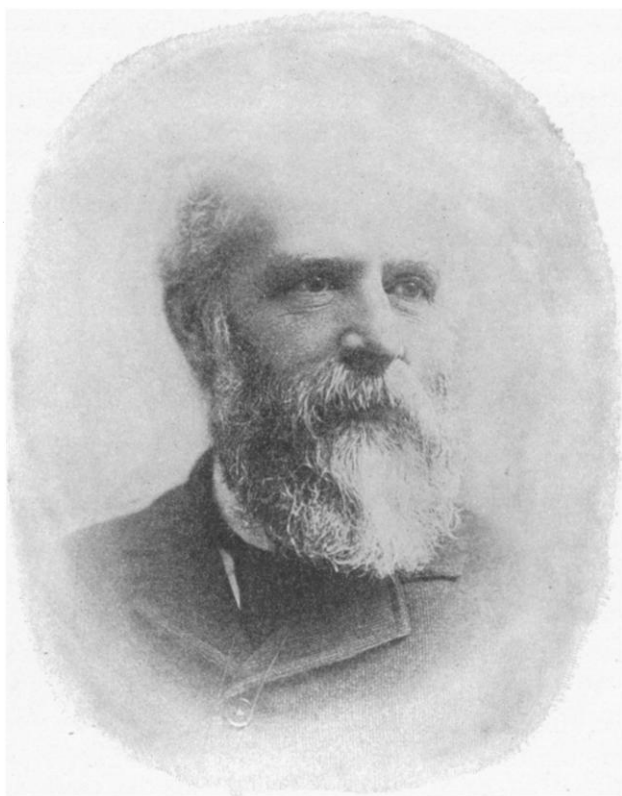
skill and of the grace within your reach but yesterday. It has been the privilege of hundreds of schoolboys during the recent weeks to send back to the old school messages of sympathy and of affection, inspired by the memory of the wise schoolmaster friend. It is my own privilege, in simple phrase, as pupil and colleague, to pay tribute to the worth and service of the fellow-man, to witness to the personality of a good man under whose teaching I have studied, under whose leadership I have labored. Dr. Bancroft's life in general outline was known to most of you.

Partly because it has been my professional business and my personal satisfaction to know young men and boys, to take with them the forward look, to help boys to forecast and prepare for their future studies, their professions, I have often in the last score of years sent back the inquiry, as opportunity presented, to Dr. Bancroft's early years, to his school days, to his first teaching. In the beginning was seen the promise of strength. Into the early days came the training, the experiences, the self-denial, the restless fidelity, the quiet on-going and the up-looking, which alone made possible the later fruitfulness.

Of plain, sturdy New England ancestry, a lineage abounding in good church deacons and robust sea captains, young Bancroft spent most of his boyhood years with a Mr. and Mrs. Patch, of Ashby, N. H., a town neighboring to New Ipswich, where he was born November 25, 1839. The good couple practically adopted him, giving him the name of Cecil Franklin Patch, in memory of a son of their own, but recently lost. As a boy Bancroft excelled in sports and was a natural leader in simple games and contests. He was not, nevertheless, strong and vigorous, but inclined to be delicate. Fond of books and nervously aggressive, he was predestined by his neighbors and friends to be a minister.

His foster father, a well-to-do farmer, provided him with the substantial foundations of a good education in the public schools of Ashby and at Appleton Academy in New Ipswich. In the latter school he completed his preparation for college, and there came first to know his lifelong friend, John Wesley Churchill, the elocutionist. He entered Dartmouth in 1856, and was grad-

uated, fourth in his class, in 1860. During his college course he several times remained out for a term to teach, providing by his own efforts for the larger part of his educational training. He was respected and beloved by a wide circle of college friends, who admired his quick skill and his sterling worth. In



DR. C. F. P. BANCROFT.

their opinion, within recent months expressed, his college life was singularly free from smallness, from meanness, and from waste. He was successful, he was assertive, he was well liked. His habits had naught to do with failure; as a young man his soul had breadth of view and a masterful grace.

His first teaching, during the winter months, took him to Lawrence Academy, Groton, Mass., in which town three genera

tions of Bancrofts, his ancestors, had resided. For four years after leaving college he was principal of Appleton Academy, in Mount Vernon, N. H., a town high up in a beautiful hill country, the home of two of his college friends. Here he first met, among the lady pupils of the Upper Academy, Miss Frances H. Kittredge, who a half dozen years later became his wife.

During these years his mind was turning more and more toward the Christian ministry. After a brief war experience in the Christian commission and a year in Union Theological Seminary, he came to Andover and completed his seminary course at the Andover "School of the Prophets." This was his first introduction to the town and to the school with which his name has long been associated. While a theological student he assisted Dr. Taylor, then principal of Phillips Academy, giving classroom instruction with some regularity for two years.

By Dr. Taylor he was recommended to the principalship of a new school, established just at the close of the war, by Mr. C. R. Robert, of New York. The school was to be "a loyal, Christian New England school for white youth, on Lookout Mountain, in Tennessee." In May, 1867, Mr. Bancroft was ordained to the ministry (May 1) and married, also at Mount Vernon, to Miss Kittredge (May 6), and together they journeyed to the southern field, a difficult yet important and worthy post of service.

At Lookout Mountain the young northerner had abundant opportunity to develop skill and tact and patience. Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft by nature and by training were the very personification of courtesy and of conciliation. But the days of reconstruction were troublous and hard. Antipathies were deep and feelings ran counter to judgment. Black boys were necessarily engaged as paid servants to do the work of the boarding school. No colored students were admitted to the school but the very presence of the ex-slaves was an irritation. The changes in curriculum were unwelcome because suggested by northern intelligence. Problems of household living called for daily decisions and prompt, wise settlement. Under such an environment, the temper of a man is made.

With such burdens pressing close, and in the practice of such daily routine, a man's genius grows. If he has tact it is multiplied unto him in increasing abundance. If he has it not, he fails. Decision of character wins respect but it also breeds quick opposition, and more than once there came to him personal threats which try the soul of the peace loving. Yet quiet insistency prevailed, and an all-compelling graciousness finally won the high regard of the school's southern patronage. The school for a time flourished in numbers and influence, and met a peculiar educational need. After five years it was closed, and with it one of the best training schools for himself which Dr. Bancroft ever attended.

As I have noted in later years the judgment held in suspense, the patient waiting for truth to appear, the respect paid to legitimate prejudice, the delicate poise in method and plan, I have thought again of the Lookout Mountain experience, giving thanks therefor, knowing the need which the larger experience of the life-work brought to him.

The year 1872-73 was spent abroad, partly in travel and partly at the University of Halle. His strong religious impulse, his devotion to the deepest needs of human nature, the inclination which led him on, to, and through the theological seminary, now turned him toward the mission field. He was making plans to connect himself with a mission station in Italy, when the sudden call from the trustees of Phillips Academy brought him again to Andover Hill.

This much of reference to the early years makes possible a truer estimate of the twenty-eight years at the head of the great American fitting-school than we might otherwise make. Of this long period of masterful leadership, no one man's estimate will be accurate; no single picture can be complete. I must needs be content if my own impression of his nature and of his service be made clear.

I am told that the first years of his principalship were hard. Dr. Samuel H. Taylor had died two years before. In the days when under-teachers were of less relative importance to school-boy and to parent, in a period of education when less of signifi-

cance was found in the material equipment, in the differentiations of the curriculum, the head of the school, the personality of a great teacher, or of a strong disciplinarian, was of chief moment.

In the passing of Dr. Taylor, himself a mighty force, and his school best known as "Uncle Sam Taylor's School," the academy became somewhat disorganized. It may be that the methods of Mr. Taylor, himself personally masterful, did not create a strong school feeling. Even with harmony of interests there could not have been close harmony of impulse, real unity of aim or of method.

The young man of thirty-three had to win his place, as must all leaders win their places, and in this instance, with his pupils dwindling in numbers, with his teachers not wholly united in personal loyalty. By quiet careful study he acquainted himself with the school traditions, with the personality and professional equipment of his colleagues, with the significance of this or that course of study. Into the large problems of administration he put abounding good will and intelligent sympathy. With modest insistence he restrained the teacher whose haste or inexperience tended toward friction. With genuine courtesy in his soul he constrained the sluggish teacher, the timid teacher, to a necessary decision. The hands of all his teachers he upheld, and boys soon found that with each and every master lay the authority of the entire school.

The novice on the faculty was often surprised to find the head of the school, the entire dignity of the institution, at his back as he met occasional offenses against school discipline. Each teacher soon found that he had a part in his administration of the school, a part which was respected and which he was expected to contribute, a part for which he must prepare himself if he were unready, and in the giving of which he had the friendly assistance of the man who stood as the responsible head.

Perhaps by the end of the first five years, in carrying through successfully, in 1878, the centennial celebration of the founding of the school, he had proved to the school itself and to the school's best friends that his wisdom, his consecration, his tem-

per, and his prudence would be sufficient for the upbuilding and strengthening of the old academy. At this time, in numbers, the school was at lowest ebb; less than two hundred boys were in attendance, but new life and new strength were coming. When I entered the school as a pupil a couple of years later, there was rare, unusual strength in the faculty, there was confidence in the principal. The numbers steadily increased, the boys entering college were passing examinations increasingly well, the college officers were speaking in strong endorsement of the school. The young men came to the school from a wider and wider area. During the last decade or more approximately 60 per cent. of its patronage has come from states wholly outside of New England. Few colleges, if any, have equaled this school in range of patronage or sphere of influence.

In the early eighties studies which did not definitely belong to the college preparatory courses were dropped—philology, intellectual and moral philosophy, conic sections, etc.—and the school became more truly a fitting school, less and less a finishing and a normal school. In the years of its greatest activity, perhaps about 1895 and 1896, the school sent to the leading eastern colleges from 120 to 160 boys per year.

Of Dr. Bancroft's latest years, of his ability to mold educational sentiment, of responsible places on committees in this association and in the New England Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools, of his contribution to the discussions of the committee of the American Philological Association, of his service to his state on the directorate of charitable institutions, of his trusteeship at Dartmouth, you are witnesses, and with many of them you are personally familiar.

It seems to me as the days pass in review, that Dr. Bancroft excelled in many personal characteristics. In some of the achievements of his life work, in some of the attributes of his nature, he has outranked other teachers and other principals. Others have outranked him in the qualities which have made them famous. To no one is it given to outclass his fellow-men in many important things.

Unless my judgment fails me, Dr. Bancroft has entered, inti-

mately and helpfully, into the lives of more young men taking first steps in education than has any other teacher our country has seen. Where other schoolmasters have written hundreds and thousands of cordial, interested, detailed personal letters to boys entering school, he has written tens of thousands. The boys first leaving home have felt in the beginnings of the acquaintance that a friend was at the school end of the correspondence. A tenacious memory, which comes only out of a genuine personal interest in each boy and in each boy's problem, and which often fails one who wishes to feel the interest, such a memory became in the school connection a safeguard and an inspiration. The keen impression of the boy's antecedents, of a boy's previous school experience, of his brothers, his cousins, his relatives of two or three generations, the parent's ambitions for the boy, the boy's school record and college plans all remained in his mind with wonderful clearness, ready for immediate use. His letters are unlike those of many a wise teacher or school principal. The personal attention to details—some have said and others would say, the almost needless attention to details—in the tremendous correspondence of a school year has not been equaled by any schoolmaster known to me.

For eight or ten years, during summer vacations in particular, trying to hold up his hands as the days of weakness came on, following his habit of personal, manuscript letters because he was committed to this habit of more intimate correspondence—in this way I have known something of his way of life. Twenty to forty long personal letters per day, during the heated weeks, when a single day's outing brought a painful stress in recovery; two thousand letters per summer, without counting the letters of the school year, a heavy mail each day; and no letters answered until the questions asked were fully looked up and a complete reply could be made.

This burden of self sacrificing toil, as his regular habit, I allude to in figures that we may fairly estimate the largeness of his place in the affections of boys and parents the country over. Dr. Taylor did not know his boys as Dr. Bancroft knew his, on all sides of their nature and in all the departments of their lives.

Mark Hopkins did not know his boys at Williams, so many of them, as Dr. Bancroft knew his at Andover.

Few men have had the right to generalize about *boys* as has had the good men to whom we now pay tribute. Dr. Bancroft's power of insight into boy nature, into a schoolboy's life was more than extraordinary, it was marvelous.

His eminence in council was most apparent in cases of discipline. No school, receiving to itself in the last twenty years an average of two hundred new boys each year, can winnow all the chaff from the wheat. Into the school community where the percentage of success is very large will surely come those whose habit of failure is pronounced, who have not done well at school previously, who cannot in such a school be saved from habits of years' standing.

Occasionally there comes to a good boy an overmastering temptation. He is led away from himself, from safe anchorage. Some boys at some times will come to grief, and, from the faculty point of view, cases of discipline come up. In the discussion of these cases, aggregating hundreds, has been manifested a rare insight into causes, a wise sympathy with the boy transgressor, a fair, many-sided deliberation, and in the cases where school standing was lost, a magnificent record of council given, of tender letters home, each containing not only notice of discipline but also hopeful helpful suggestion of remedy—the next best thing to do—the road to recovery, definite, not vague—here has been wisdom, and power, a wealth of resource that passeth all skill and all cleverness. Many schoolmasters have I seen, more suspicious of a fault, keener detectives in ferreting out a violation of rules, less successful in preventing the mistake, more swift in punishment of error or waywardness. None have I known so ready to recognize the dignity and personal promise in a boy, the probable future and the possible worth in a school-boy culprit or even in a depraved lad who could be changed over by the school environment.

The departmental teaching of today tends toward narrowness. We rightly ask of our strongest teachers great professional skill. Even our boys may not be handled by crude teachers who have

a smattering of knowledge or who learn their subjects by cramming or hasty review just before meeting their classes. Yet the excellence which is possible through college training and graduate courses tends in secondary teaching toward the narrow view.

The expert view need not be, and it should not be, but it sometimes is the narrow view, and the danger is felt most in preparatory schools. In the college there is little, if any, danger of a professor knowing too much. In schools a subject for faculty discussion is apt to concern our strongly departmental teachers only as it comes into or under their specialty.

More of all-round, many-sided training is required of teachers in the secondary schools of France, Germany, and England than we require, and in our high schools and academies there is increasing need of breadth view, a need which concerns all teachers who would give a boy power to think, to plan, to find relish in all books, to know life in symmetry. Dr. Bancroft had breadth of view, educationally, intellectually, morally.

I do not think of him as a profound scholar, adding largely to the world's storehouse of knowledge in any one department of research. There have been greater teachers than he in particular subjects, even in his own, better drill masters, teachers more likely to send their own pupils up to college confident of complete success in every test. But there have been few teachers who had his range of accurate knowledge, his versatility of equipment, or who could better give a topic or a day's lesson its proper literary or historical setting; who at fifty years could distinguish Sturtevant's theorem from McLaurin's theorem, or could quickly answer successive boy's questions as to Grimm's law—the accent of Greek verbs, the $\frac{Mv^2}{2}$ of physics, the $\frac{\pi D}{6}$ of geometry, the historical significance of the Norman conquest, the analysis of a plant, the theme of a symphony, the picture of the world's life, social, commercial, political?

His knowledge was not vague, it was definite. His reading was as wide as his life interests, and they concerned an all-round man. He had faith in the specialists who do the school work by departments, but he deplored oftentimes the narrow view. His

own view of life, his conception of the needs of a school curriculum, his own range of activity, was full and rich and wholesome.

One may not recall his gracious utterances in public address, his courtesy in council or in debate, his respect for others' judgment or preferences, without paying tribute to the steadiness of his self-control, to the poise and generosity of his being. He had the power to wait, to be patient until events shaped themselves, until conditions were ripe, until forces were ready to play.

He did not anticipate Providence, because he remembered that other souls were believing, planning, contributing each its part to the fullness of the life of the school to which he gave himself. In hastening the right time he sometimes seemed slow.

In sagacious self-control he was a master, and it is not easy for a clear-headed thinker to see a thing go wrong that the will of the greater number may prevail.

He occasionally, with quiet bravery, was forced by strong conviction, to distrust and leave the expressed wish of the majority. It was always to his own painful hurt, and at such times his reasons always came forth with vigor and great clearness.

In his executive functions he was the most differential school officer I have known. His courtesy was inborn; his graciousness whole-souled. He was far sighted, he was tactful to an amazing degree, more anxious to have the future outcome good than to win a present victory.

Dr. Bancroft sometimes made mistakes, serious mistakes, errors of judgment, failures through timidity. The men whom I have known best and loved best in my life thus far have not been infallible. Man's discernment is finite.

A harmonious body of trained men is better than a genius in guiding the destinies of a school, as of a state. The single impulse, even of a very wise man, does not safely lead a body of youth.

Truth itself is many sided, life is complex. No two boys are

alike in inheritance, in possibility, in practical, everyday needs. That school is most fortunate that has in its faculty the largest percentage of good sense, of intelligent conviction, of modest courage, of many sided interest in a schoolboy's entire life, of consecration to hard work and to high ideals. These qualities, of great moment throughout an entire faculty, Dr. Bancroft possessed in large measure.

His mistakes were not those of selfishness, or of ease-taking, or of indifference. His skill and his power are attested in the marvelous accuracy of his judgment, in his intense devotion to his school duties, in the disregard of self, which doubtless cost him years of added service, in his love of boys for their own sakes.

Dr. Bancroft was a Christian gentleman. His personal faith was warm and abiding. He was impatient at beliefs which narrowed life and starved the soul, at forms which are artificial, at methods which are superficial. Few active, busy men have found it so often possible to take a young man aside and speak the intimate, personal word which would hold the boy strong against evil, loyal to pure motives, responsive to Divine impulse.

No one, teacher or pupil, year after year, has heard his strong, noble prayers at morning chapel without being quickened to the better life. No one has been privileged to unite with his personal family at morning devotions without knowing the secret of his power, the keynote to his sweet graciousness.

As the last years came on, years of great suffering, when a less resolute man would have laid down the burden, years when his professional work was less and less constructive, when strength would not suffice for all that the busy months might bring, then came out the qualities of his manhood, the sustained power of consecration, the restlessness for service, the aggressive yet patient tactfulness which have marked his life. He died in the harness, as he had wished, not falling by sudden accident, but holding himself against painful odds close to the burden of toil until the last ounce of energy and endurance was spent.

His view of life was hopeful, his joy in life abounding, the activities of his brain were tireless, the impulses of the heart

were true and full of manly strength. His service to the student world were masterful, grand in volume and in tone because his spirit was unselfish. His life was genuine and strenuous, two rugged words I have long prized, and which may not yield place to others in this estimate of his worth.

In the archives of a thousand homes are found the epistles of his ministry. In the manly strength of our college-bred men is erected the monument to his glory. Verily, in him "hath nature wrought her perfect work." Earth's functions, heaven-born and heaven-quickenened, have not failed.

GEORGE D. PETTEE,

Registrar of Phillips Academy, 1887-1900.

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